

Series: *Christ Preeminent In You*

Title: "Adoption: The Two *Paracletes*" (Colossians 3:1-4, John 14:16-26)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

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As we continue our consideration of the tremendous gift of adoption as sons that God has given to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, let us begin once again with our theme passage for this series of messages, in Colossians chapter 3 beginning at verse one.

And as always, I do encourage you to follow along in your own copy of God's Word as you are able. We will be considering not only this passage but also several other passages of Scripture today, and there is nothing better for you to do than to focus your attention on the matters we are discussing by looking at them directly in Holy Scripture.

And so we begin in Colossians chapter 3, beginning in verse one:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

In recent messages, we have been considering the fact that this great imperative – to seek those things which are above, to set our minds on things above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God, and not to focus our spiritual attention on the things of this earth – this great imperative is possible for the believer in Christ, and is necessary for the believer in Christ, because we

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have been brought into a special relationship with God.

And as we have seen, the Scriptures refer to this new special relationship as "the adoption as sons." We have seen that this relationship brings the believer in Christ into a position of new and abundant privilege. And we saw in our last message that this privilege begins with the fact that God, who had been our condemning Judge, is now our loving Father.

### **Our Heavenly Father**

He is now not only the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. He is also now the God and Father of us all, the God and Father of every person who is truly a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, according to Ephesians chapter 4 verse six.

We also saw that the God who has adopted us as His sons because of Christ is the Father who lovingly corrects us when we sin. He corrects us when we think or act in disobedience to His Word. And we saw in Hebrews chapter 12 that the fact that our loving Father corrects us gives us the assurance that we are truly His adopted sons.

If you are a believer in Christ, if you are truly an adopted son of God, your loving Father will indeed do this. But Satan will try to convince you that the correcting or chastening hand of God upon you is because you are not truly a child of God.

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But Hebrews tells us that the very fact that you are being corrected is primary evidence of your special relationship with your heavenly Father. If God is truly doing the work of sanctifying you, preparing you for life in the world to come, then He will correct you in this present life. It is proof that you truly do belong to God. God who was once your condemning Judge is now God your loving Father.

We have also seen that because of our adoption as sons, God our Father is now approachable. We have seen that we have the great privilege of prayer, the ability to enter the very throne room of Heaven, because Ephesians chapter 2 verse six tells us that God who has made us alive together in Christ by His grace has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..."

And Hebrews chapter 4 verse 16 gives the greatest words of encouragement to the believer in Christ, the adopted sons of God:

Let us therefore come boldly [in the original language, come with cheerful confidence] to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

### **The Protocol of Prayer for Adopted Sons**

The Biblical definition of prayer is the individual Christian meeting with his Father. But the Bible also tells us that prayer involves all three persons of the

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Godhead. The Biblical definition of prayer is the Christian believer coming *to* our heavenly Father, *through* the person and finished work of His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and *in* the Holy Spirit.

There are many Scriptures in the New Testament that speak of these things, but for the sake of time let me cite just a few verses in support of each of these points about our proper relationship with the Godhead in prayer.

In the model prayer that the Lord Jesus gives us in Matthew chapter 6, He tells us that we are to pray by addressing "Our Father." Hebrews chapter 4 verse 15 tells us that Jesus Christ is the High Priest who intercedes for us with the Father, and so in a number of places in the Gospels, Jesus instructs believers to pray to the Father in Jesus' name. And then in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 18, we are instructed to pray "always with all prayer and supplication in the [Holy] Spirit.

Now, this may seem to be merely a technical matter. It may seem that it is unimportant. But dear friends, this is a matter of the greatest importance. Let me explain why that is true.

### **The Gift of the Spirit to Every Adopted Son**

Turn with me in your Bible, if you are able, to John chapter 14 beginning at verse 16. Before we read these words, let me set the scene for you. Jesus was about to go to the Cross. He had told His disciples that this was going to happen. He had told them that He was going to be leaving them. When His disciples

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heard this, they were filled with doubts and fears. And so the Lord Jesus spoke these words to them, knowing those doubts and fears – John chapter 14, beginning at verse 16:

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My Words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

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"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:16-26)

And in John chapter 15, verse 26, Jesus said this:

But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. (John 15:26)

After His resurrection, when Jesus was about to ascend to Heaven, He reminded the believers once again that the Holy Spirit would come soon after He would leave them:

Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

This is the sum of what Jesus was telling them: I will soon be leaving this earth and returning to Heaven. But I will ask God the Father, and He will give you another helper, who will abide with you forever, and that helper is the Holy Spirit.

### **Our Two *Paracletes***

The Greek word that is translated "Comforter" in the original King James Bible or "Helper" in the New King James Bible is *parakletos* or *paraclete*. In the

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original Greek this word means "one who is called alongside to help." In the contemporary Greek usage of the time in which the New Testament was written, the word *paraclete* had the more specific meaning of "a helper in court." A *paraclete* was a person who spoke on behalf of another person before a judge – in other words, a *paraclete* was an *intercessor*.

And note also that the Lord Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as *another Paraclete* – "another Helper" or "another Comforter." The word that is translated "another" in John 14:16 is the Greek word *allos*, which means "another of the same kind." God the Holy Spirit is "another Helper" or "another Comforter" of the same kind as God the Son.

Now, the four Gospels do not record Jesus ever referring to Himself as a *paraclete*, but in his epistles, the Apostle John used the term *paraclete* to also describe the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In First John chapter 2 verse one, John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes this: "If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

The word that is translated "Advocate" in this verse is the same word that Jesus used to describe the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John. It is, once again, the word *paraclete* in the Greek. Furthermore, Hebrews chapter 7 verse 25 tells us that Jesus is able to save "to the uttermost" all who come to God through Him, since "He ever lives to make intercession for them" – since He is their *Paraclete* in Heaven.

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And in Hebrews chapter 4, beginning at verse 14, the writer to the Hebrews encourages believers to stand firm in this world, because we have access to the very throne of God the Father through the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews chapter 4, beginning at verse 14:

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So dear friends, what is the sum of these statements of Scripture? The sum of it is that we, having been given adoption as sons by God the Father, have two *paracletes*, two intercessors, who are constantly at work on our behalf. Just as Jesus is our *Paraclete* in Heaven, God the indwelling Holy Spirit is our *Paraclete* on earth.

### **Nothing Can Separate Us From Our Father's Adopting Love**

In John chapters 14 and 15, Jesus spoke to His disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit because of His impending physical absence from them, and because of the work that He had given them to do in this world after His departure. And in Romans chapter 8, the Apostle Paul likewise gives us inspired words of comfort as we await the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as we are doing His work in

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this world while we wait. Romans chapter 8, beginning at verse 18. Please turn there with me if you are able – Romans chapter 8, beginning at verse 18:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance (Romans 8:18-25).

And then note what follows in the next verse, verse 26:

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself

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makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

Dear friends, as the adopted sons of God, we have double comfort, and double assurance – not only of future glory, but also of present access to our heavenly Father for every need.

Ephesians chapter 1 verses 13 and 14 tell us that the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit living within us is the down payment of our ultimate redemption, the guarantee both of our present salvation and also of our future glory. And so the Apostle Paul continues in Romans chapter 8, at verse 28 with these great words of assurance:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8: 28-31)

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And then in the verses that follow in Romans chapter 8, the Apostle Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit once again links our present assurance of salvation as the adopted sons of God, and our future glory as the adopted sons of God, to the intercession of the only begotten Son of God as well. Romans chapter 8, verse 32:

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (verses 32-41).

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## **Adopted Sons Must Focus On Things Above**

Two all-powerful and all-knowing persons of the Godhead are constantly interceding on behalf of every adopted son of God. God the Holy Spirit is the believer's *Paraclete* in this world, and God the Son is the believer's *Paraclete* at the Father's right hand. And so we have all the more reason to obey the great imperative that we find in Colossians chapter 3 concerning our life in this present world:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Dear friends, there is yet more for us to learn about this wonderful doctrine, this wonderful gift of adoption as sons that God the Father has given to us through Christ. Because we have this new relationship with all three persons of the Trinity, we also have a new relationship with our fellow human beings. We have a new relationship not only with our fellow adopted sons, our fellow believers in Christ, but we also have a new relationship with unbelievers.

We need to understand the nature of those new relationships as well. We need to understand the way in which our Heavenly Father calls upon us to think and to live in relationship to both believers and unbelievers. That relationship is also to

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be characterized by the imperative that we find in Colossians chapter 3, that we are to set our minds on things above, and not on things on the earth.

And so, the Lord willing, in our next message we are going to take up those new relationships, our relationships with believers and unbelievers, as we seek to walk worthy of our position and our calling as the adopted sons of God in this present world.

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